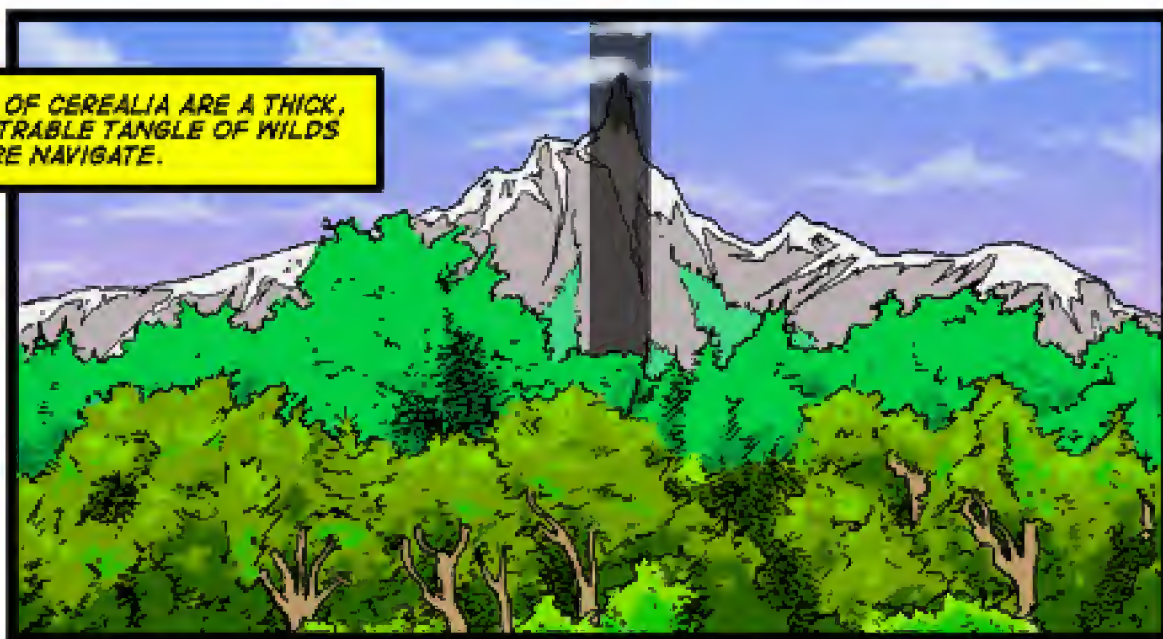


THE FORESTS OF CEREALIA ARE A THICK, HIGH-IMPENETRABLE TANGLE OF WILDS THAT FEW DARE NAVIGATE.



THOSE WHO DO ARE USUALLY LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO HIDE.



FROM THE LAW, FROM THEIR PASTS, FROM THEMSELVES.

EVENTUALLY, HOWEVER, THEY ALL FIND THEMSELVES HERE.



"EVERYBODY COMES TO SAM'S."

BREAKFAST of the GODS



book two of three

O CAP'N, MY CAP'N

"THE BOOZE IS WATERED DOWN AND THE CLIENTELE IS SHADY, BUT THAT'S ALL PART OF ITS CHARM."

"NOBODY'S HERE FOR THE AMBIENCE, THOUGH. THEY COME FOR THE SHADOWS, FOR THE ANONYMITY AND, EVERY NOW AND THEN, FOR A DEAL."

"THAT'S WHAT BROUGHT ME."

"CRUNCH HIRED ME BECAUSE I'M THE BEST AT WHAT I DO."

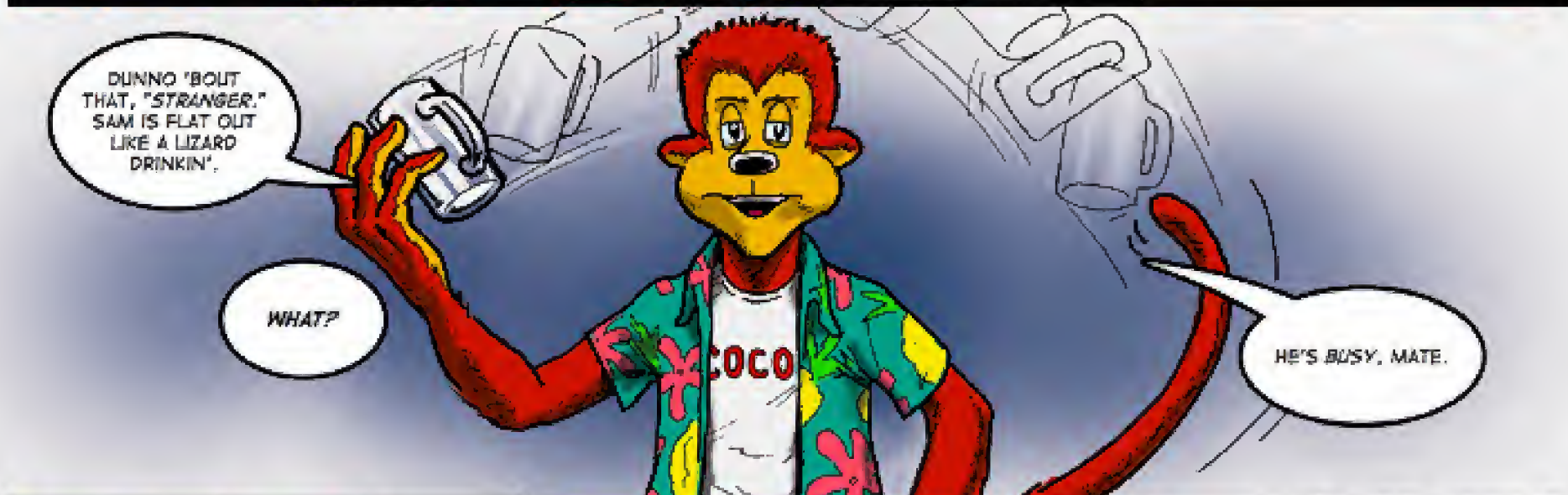
"I WATCH. I LISTEN. I BLEND IN."

"HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT IS THE NAME OF THE GAME AND YOU'RE LOOKIN' AT THE CHAMP."

"FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES, I'M INVISIBLE."

G'DAY, RABBIT!
LONG TIME NO
SEE, MATE.

...URK...





"THAT'S THE WAY SAM
LIKES TO DO BUSINESS."

"HE KEEPS YOU WAITING.
KEEPS YOU THIRSTY AND
BUYING."



"THE STINK OF DESPERATION
IS STRONG IN THIS JOINT.
SMELLS LIKE SWEAT AND
BAD MILK."

"AND EVERYWHERE YOU LOOK IS A
REMINDER THAT NOT ALL STORIES
HAVE HAPPY ENDINGS."

"LIKE THIS ONE HERE."

CAUGHT ME ON A
BAD DAY IS ALL, YA
OUTER SPACE
FREAK....

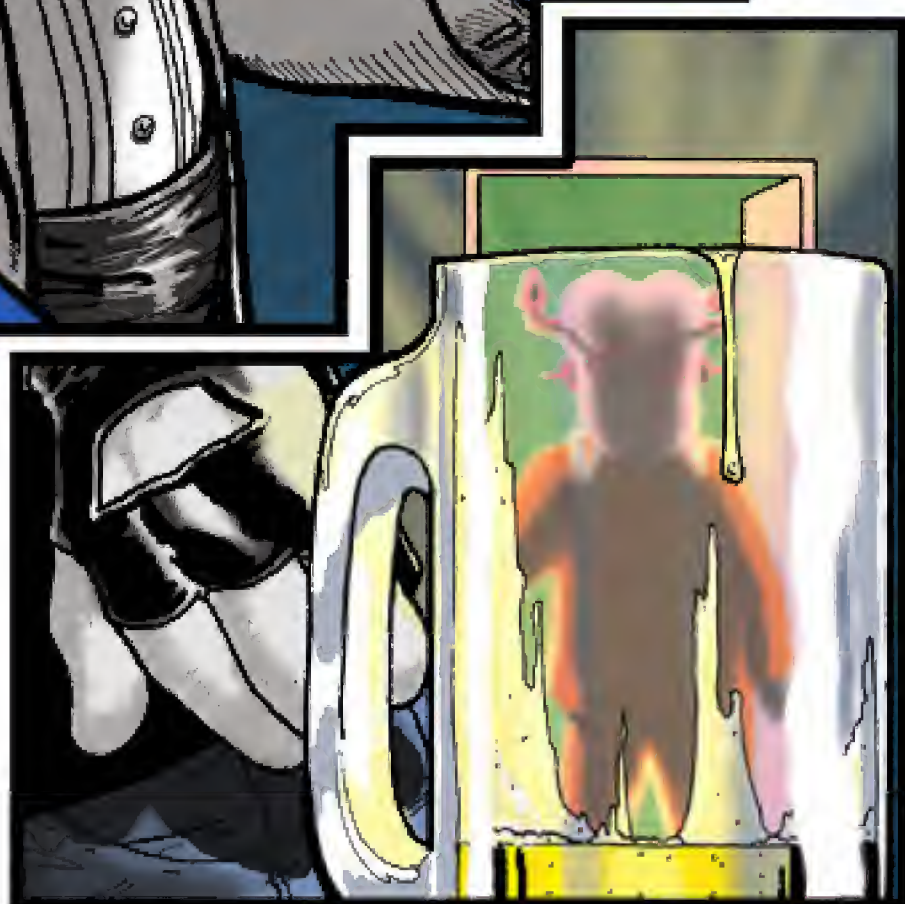
"QUAKE USED TO BE ONE OF THE
MOST POWERFUL GUYS AROUND.
HE COULD CRACK THE EARTH WITH
A FLICK OF HIS WRIST."

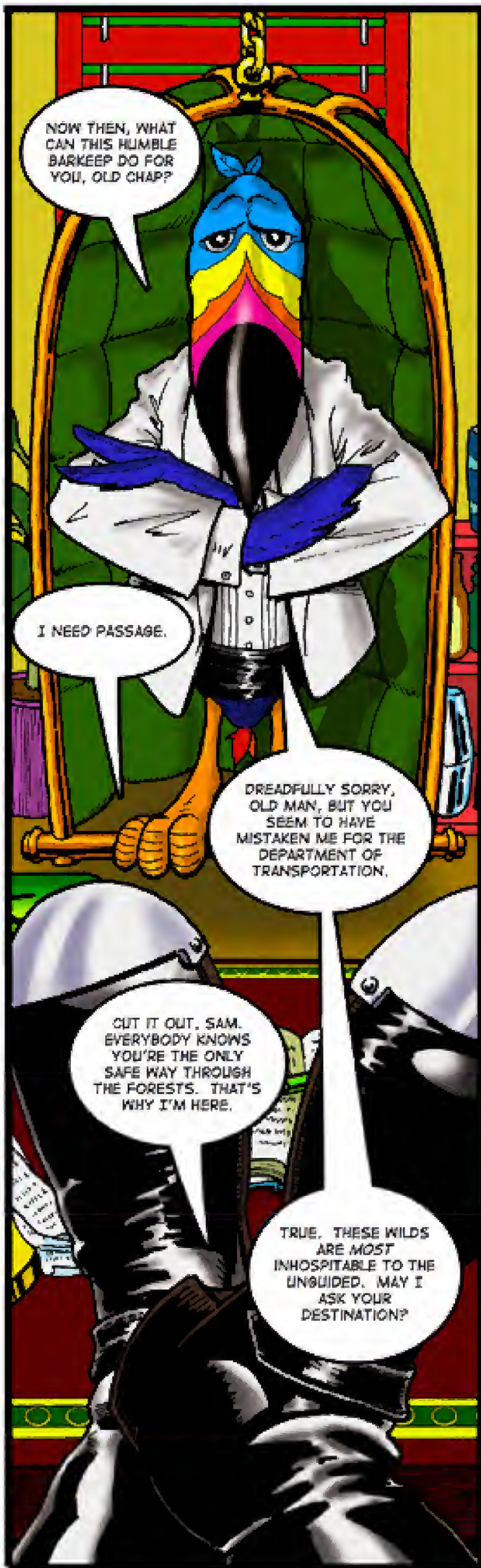


"BUT YEARS AGO THERE WAS A
CONTEST BETWEEN QUAKE AND
AN ALIEN JOKER WHO LIVED
AMONG US FOR A WHILE. A
CONTEST THAT QUAKE LOST."

"HE NEVER QUITE RECOVERED
FROM THE BLOW."

...ANY TIME YOU'RE
READY F'R A REMATCH,
YOU KNOW WHERE T'
FIND ME, YA PROPELLER-
HEADED SUNNUVABITCH...





NOW THEN, WHAT CAN THIS HUMBLE BARKEEP DO FOR YOU, OLD CHAPP?

I NEED PASSAGE.

DREADFULLY SORRY, OLD MAN, BUT YOU SEEM TO HAVE MISTAKEN ME FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION.

CUT IT OUT, SAM. EVERYBODY KNOWS YOU'RE THE ONLY SAFE WAY THROUGH THE FORESTS. THAT'S WHY I'M HERE.

TRUE. THESE WILDS ARE MOST INHOSPITABLE TO THE UNGUIDED. MAY I ASK YOUR DESTINATION?



I'M HEADED FOR CASTLE CHOCULA.



AH, I SEE. COCO NEGLECTED TO INFORM ME THAT YOU ARE INSANE.

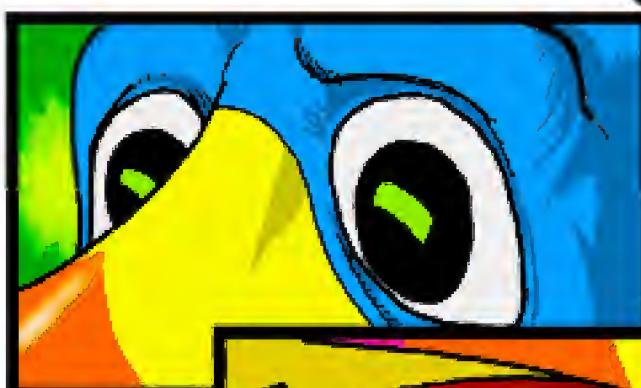
IT'S BEEN A PLEASURE SPEAKING WITH YOU.

I'M GOING ON BEHALF OF CAP'N CRUNCH.

ON A STRICTLY ALTRUISTIC MISSION, I'M SURE.
BUT, FRANKLY, THAT MATTERS TO ME NOT A JOT. I DO NOT TAKE SIDES. I FIND NEUTRALITY TO BE GOOD FOR ONE'S BUSINESS AND ONE'S HEALTH.



YOU KNOW WHAT ELSE PUTS A SPRING IN YOUR STEP?



FIFTY TOPS NOW, FIFTY MORE WHEN I GET BACK SAFE.



I SAY, LOVELY EVENING FOR A STROLL, WOT?



LET'S TAKE A WALK...



OKAY, SERIOUSLY,
HOLD UP FOR A
GODDAMN SECOND!

DISGUSTING HABIT,
OLD FRUIT.
TERRIBLY BAD FOR
YOU, YOU KNOW.

YEAH, WELL, SO'S
AGREEING TO INFILTRATE
THE HQ OF AN EVIL
MASTERMIND, BUT HERE
WE ARE.

MOST OF THOSE WHO
COME TO ME FOR
PASSAGE ARE LOOKING
TO AVOID CHOCULA
AND HIS MINIONS.

YOU'RE THE FIRST TO
ASK FOR DIRECTIONS
TO HIS FRONT DOOR.

RENT DON'T
PAY ITSELF.

READY TO
VENTURE
ONWARD?

YEAH.
SO HOW DO YOU
KNOW WHICH
WAY IS UP IN ALL
OF THIS?

I JUST FOLLOW
MY NOSE. IT
ALWAYS KNOWS.

HOURS PASS AND THE TERRAIN SLOWLY
INCLINES AS THEY REACH THE FOOT OF
THE FROSTED PEAKS AND A WALL OF
DARKNESS THAT STRETCHES AS FAR AS
THE EYE CAN SEE.

THIS IS WHERE I
LEAVE YOU, MY
FLUFFY TAILED
FRIEND.

JUST DON'T
FORGET TO BE BACK
HERE IN TWO DAYS
FOR THE RETURN
TRIP. THAT'S THE
DEAL.

AS I AM A BIRD OF MY
WORD, I SHALL BE
HERE. THE QUESTION,
MY DEAR FELLOW, IS
WHETHER YOU WILL BE.

SO THIS IS "NIGHT." WELL, IT'S DARK ENOUGH.

I START CLIMBING, MAKING USE OF THE MOONLIGHT AND THE OCCASIONAL FLASH OF LIGHTNING TO HELP ME FIND MY WAY.

IT'S SLOW GOING AS I FEEL FOR EACH STEP IN THIS SHADOW WORLD WHERE ANYTHING COULD BE HIDING, WATCHING.

MY TEETH ARE RATTLING, AND NOT JUST FROM THE COLD.

I'M A GUY WHO KNOWS A THING OR TWO ABOUT SECRETS BUT HERE, THIS PLACE, IT'S LIKE I'VE PLUNGED INTO THE BLACK HEART OF EVERY SECRET EVER KEPT.

WHAT SEEMS LIKE AN ETERNITY OF SUCH LYRICAL WAXING PASSES UNTIL I COME UPON IT AT LAST --

-- A STONY BLACK CITADEL STABBING AT THE SKY.

CASTLE CHOCULA!



"CANT EXACTLY KNOCK ON THE FRONT DOOR SO I FOLLOW MY OWN NOSE TO A LESS DIGNIFIED POINT OF ENTRY."

"NOW THIS IS LUCKY."

"CRUNCH'LL DEFINITELY TO KNOW WHAT POOR SAPS THE COUNT'S GOT LOCKED UP IN HERE."

PSSST!

HEY -- BUDDY--

WHO ARE YOU?

NO, IT DOESN'T MATTER. WHOEVER YOU ARE, YOU NEED TO GET AWAY.



DON'T WORRY
ABOUT ME, PAL.

SO WHY'S THE
COUNT GOT
YOU LOCKED UP
IN HERE?

FOR - HRR -
SAFETY, YOU -
HRRNH - FOOL.

OH YEAH?
WHOSE?



EVERYBODY'S!!



FAAH-ROOOOOOT!



PLEASE, PLEASE
LET US GO.

WHO --
SNAPP!

RABBIT? DID THEY
GET YOU TOO?

NO, I--
ARE YOU AND YOUR
BROTHERS OKAY?
EVERYBODY THOUGHT
YOU'D BEEN, YOU KNOW,
DISCONTINUED.

WE'RE ALIVE, YES,
BUT WE'RE A LONG
WAY FROM "OKAY."

CAN YOU HELP
US?

UH, THAT'S NOT - NOT THE
JOB. SORRY, BUT I'M SURE
ONCE I TELL THE CAP'N
WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE,
HE'LL RALLY THE TROOPS OR
SOMETHING.

JUST HANG IN THERE.

WHAT ELSE CAN
WE DO?

MNNRPHNGR.



"I'M A PRETTY TOUGH GUY - I'VE SEEN SOME THINGS IN MY DAY. BUT SEEING THE KRISPIES LIKE THAT?"

"IT RATTLED ME."



"WHAT COULD THOSE HARMLESS RICE-PUFFERS -"

"-OR SONNY OR THE BEE OR ANY OF THE OTHER POOR SOULS WHO'VE GONE MISSING -"

"-HAVE DONE TO DESERVE SUCH TREATMENT?"



"WHAT'S CHOCULA AFTER?"

"THAT'S WHAT I'M HERE TO FIND OUT."

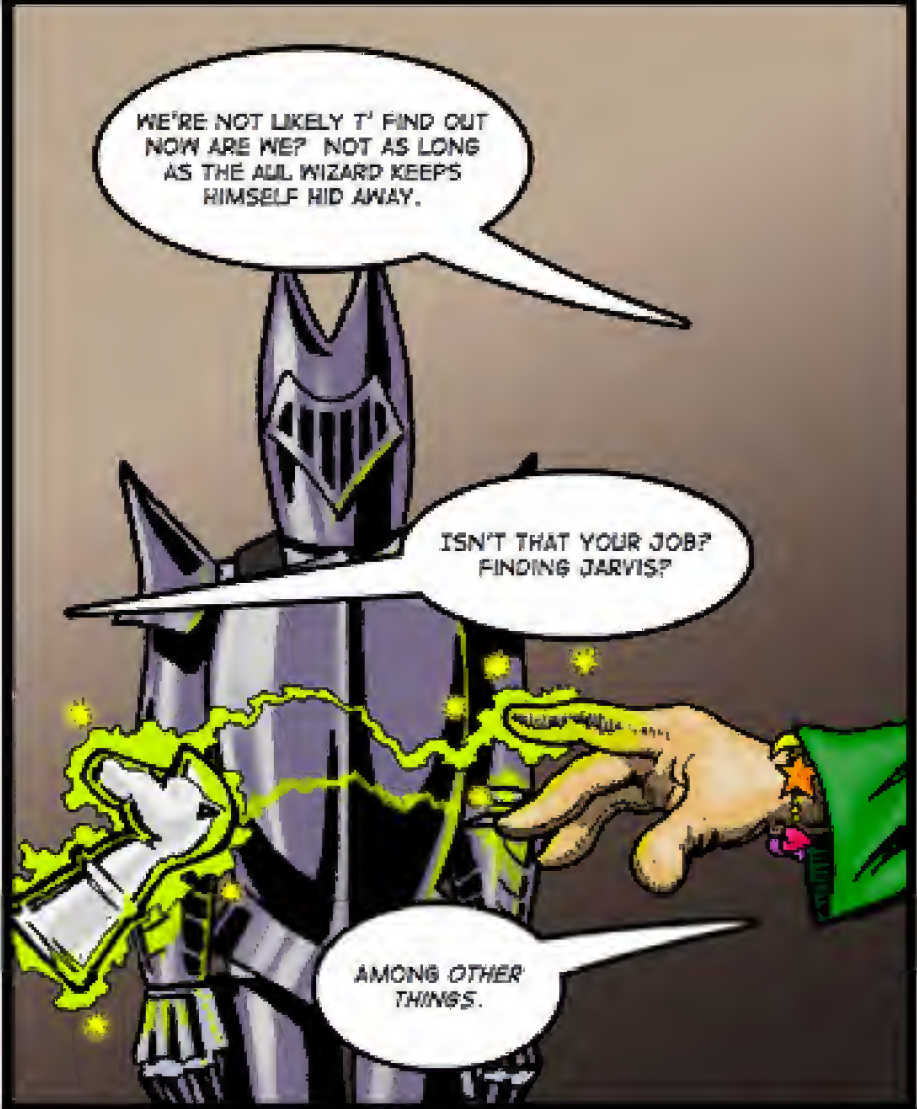
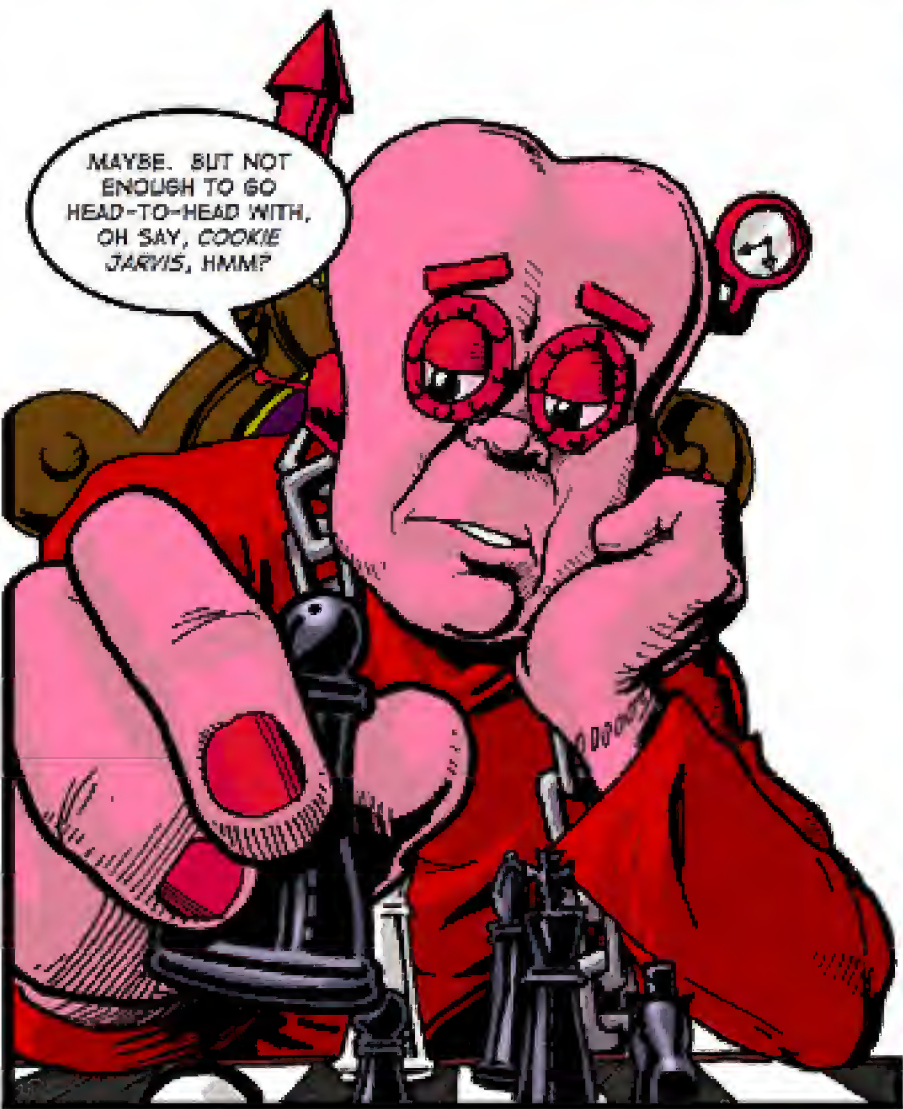
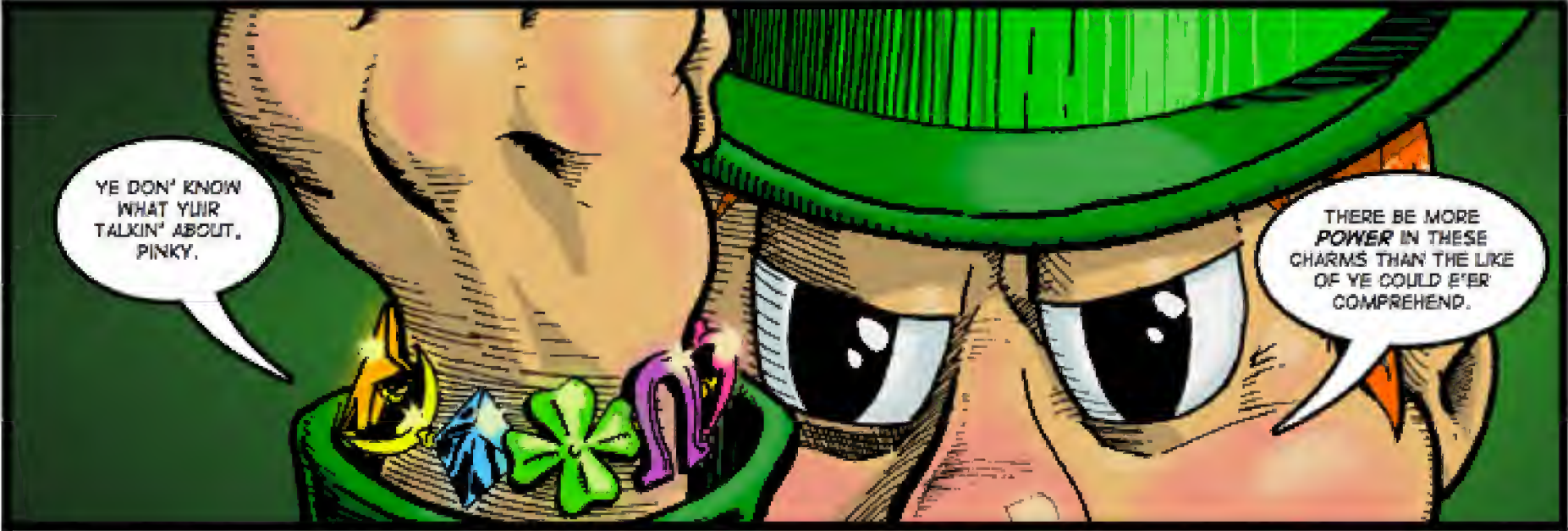



I JUST WANT TO KNOW WHAT HE PROMISED YOU.

NEVER YE MIND ABOUT THAT, BOYO.




SURELY IT'S NOT JUST PROTECTING YOUR GODDAMNED "LUCKY CHARMS."





...MORE DIRECT METHODS.
I BELIEVE IT'S TIME TO
CONFRONT THE OLD MAN
FACE TO FACE.



HE HAS THE
INFORMATION, I
KNOW IT. WHO ELSE
WOULD THE KING AND
HIS WIZARD HAVE
TRUSTED?

However you
proceed, Count,
just don't forget
our arrangement.

OF COURSE NOT, MY
FRIEND. WHEN NIGHT FALLS
AT LAST OVER THIS LAND,
YOU AND YOUR PEOPLE WILL
MEET NO RESISTANCE.
CHOCULA OUT.

"UH-OH."

FRANK, PLEASE
ESCORT OUR GUEST TO
THE THRONE ROOM.





WOW. YOU
REALLY ARE
BATSHIT CRAZY.



EVERYONE HAS A
PRICE, RABBIT.



LISTEN, PAL, THERE'S NOT
ENOUGH BOX TOPS IN THE
WORLD TO MAKE ME
BETRAY THE CAP'N.

I SEE.
AND THERE'S
NOTHING ELSE YOU
DESIRE? NOTHING
AT ALL?

...NO.



ARE YOU SURE?

THE GHOST HAS NOT BEEN AUDIENCE TO THE FAUSTIAN BARGAIN BEING STRUCK IN THE THRONE ROOM. HE HAS HAD OTHER THINGS ON HIS MIND --- OR IN IT.

BOOOBERRY

HUH? WHAT IS IT?

IT COMES FROM EVERYWHERE AND NOWHERE, FROM WITHIN AND WITHOUT AND THEN SOMEWHERE ELSE ENTIRELY.

BOOBERRY
YOUR TIME COMES

BOOBERRY

A VOICE THAT CALLS TO HIM BUT WILL NOT ANSWER IN RETURN.

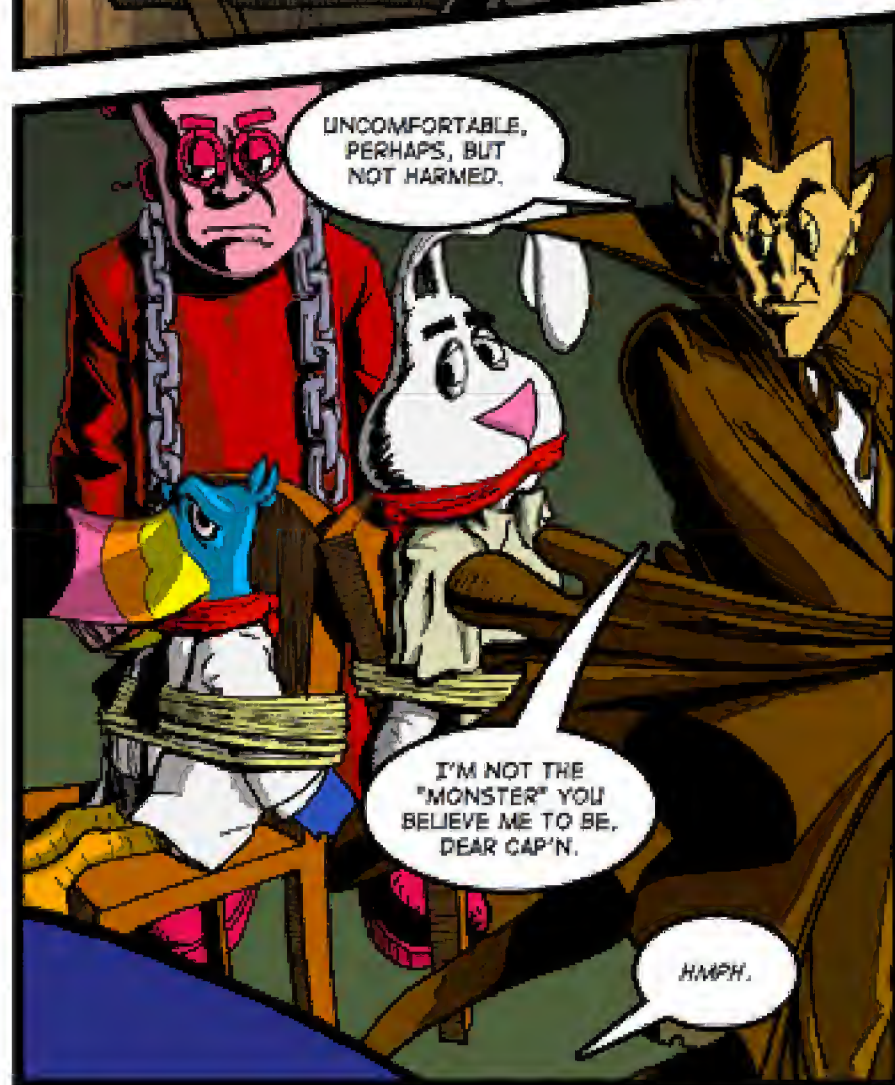
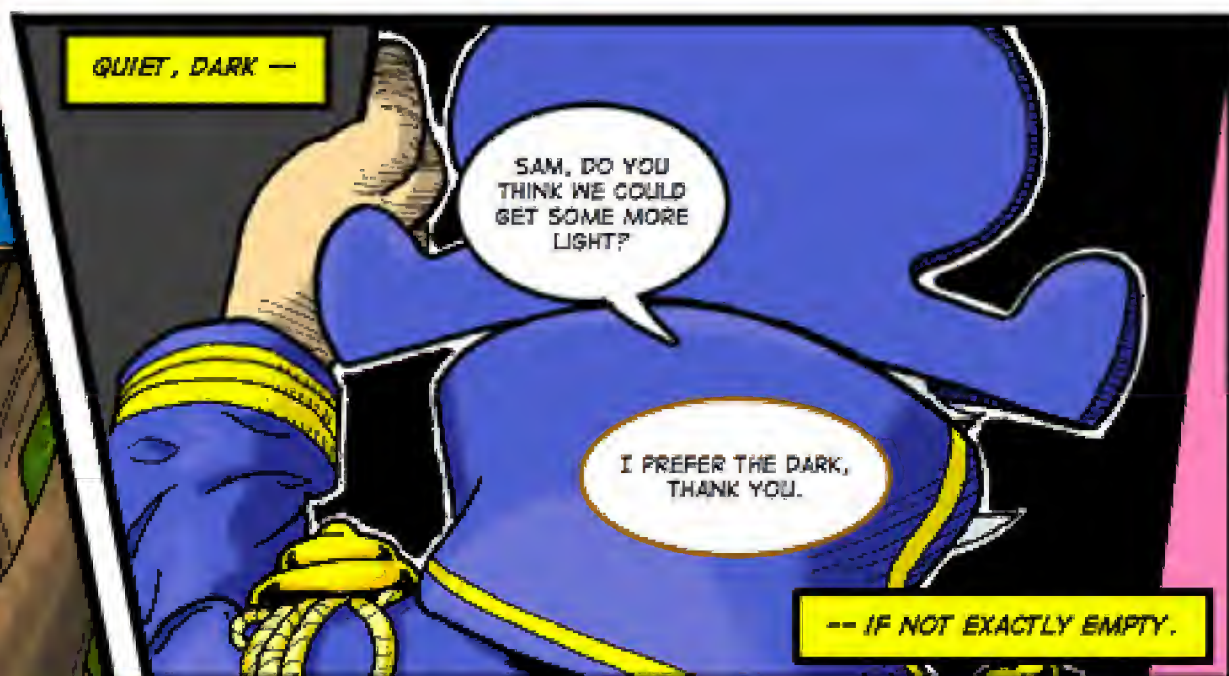
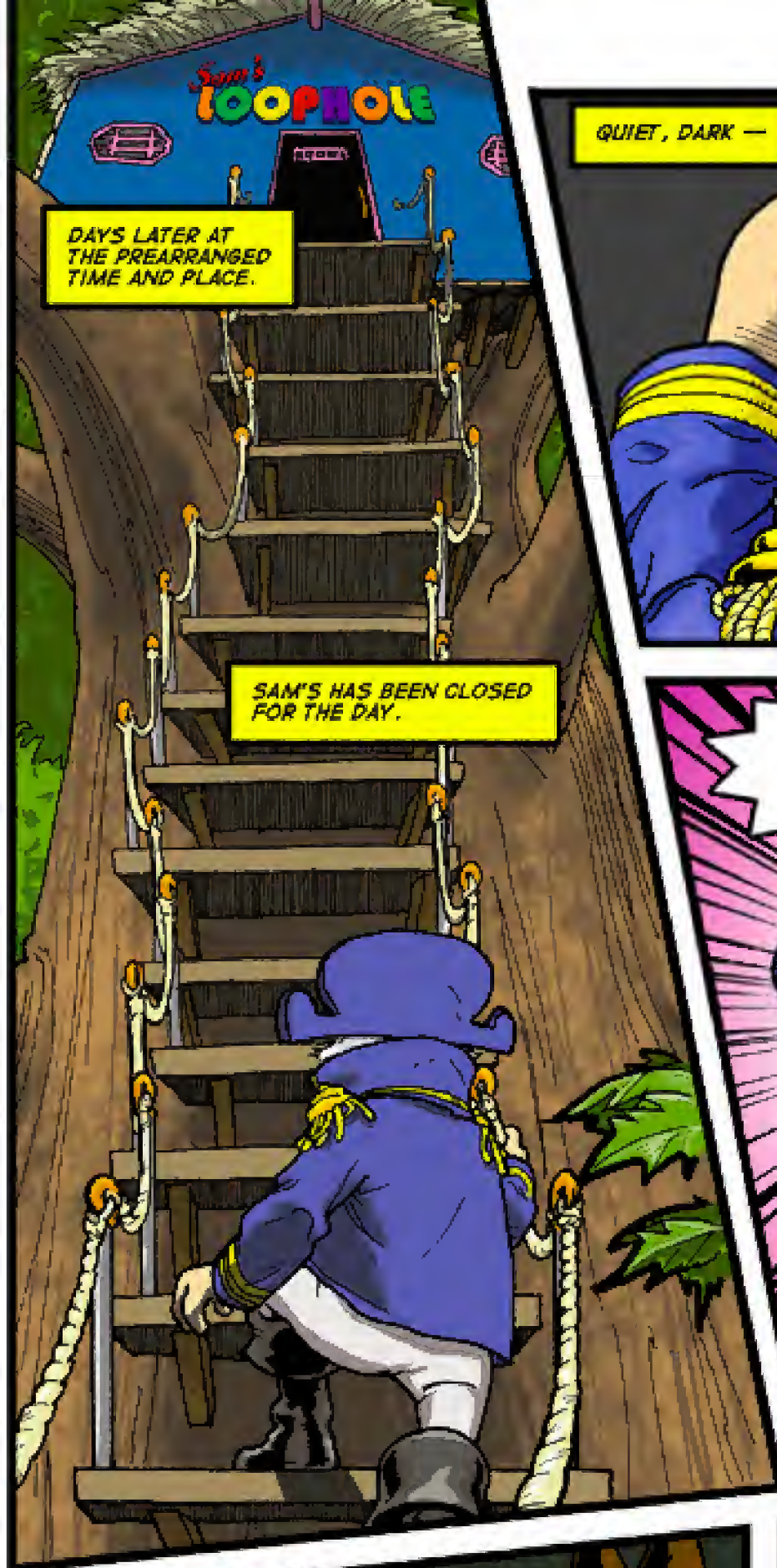
THIS ISN'T FUNNY ANYMORE, WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?

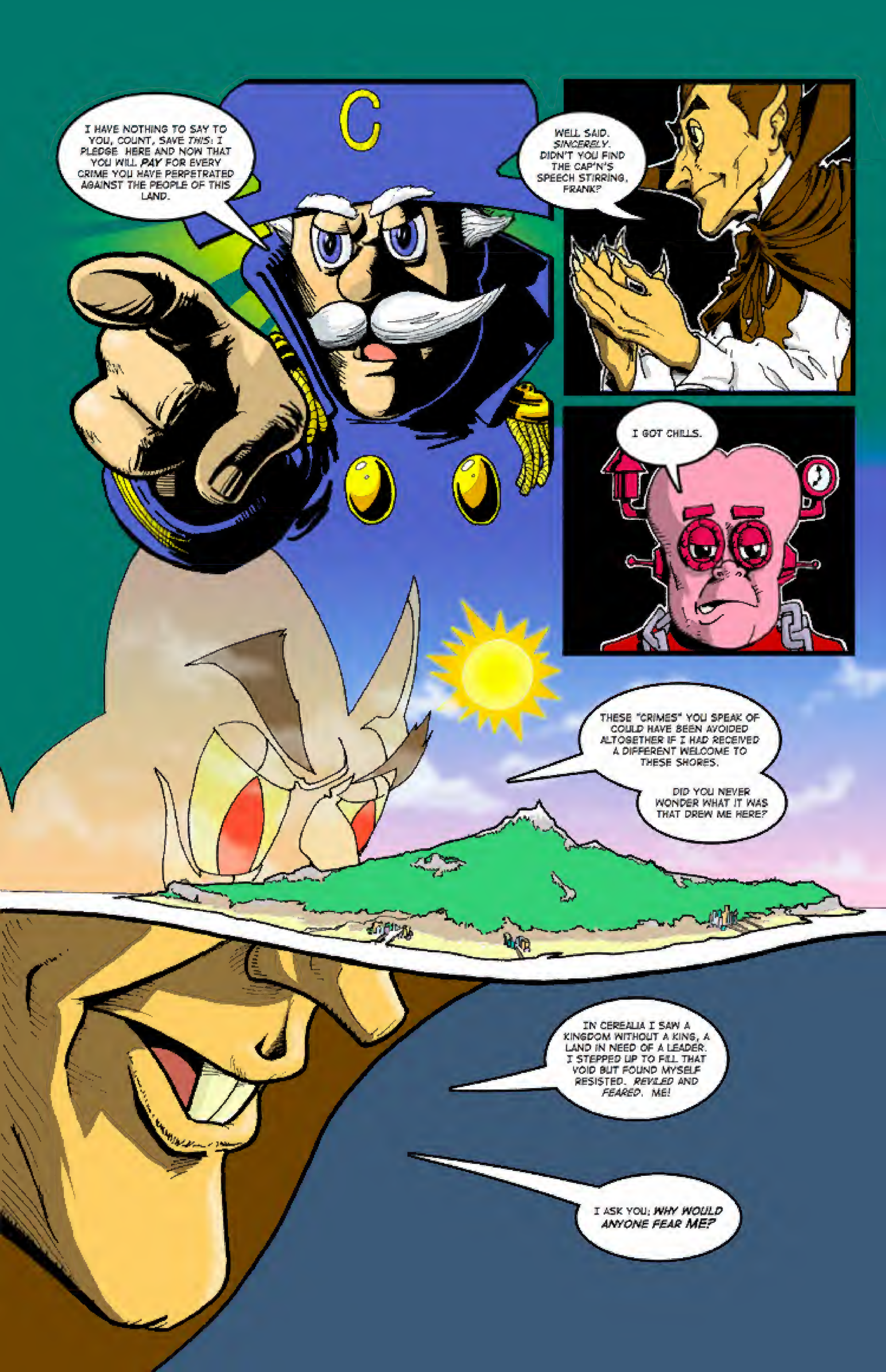
BOOBERRY

WHAT'RE YE ON ABOUT? FADE AWAY, YE BOTHERSOME WEE TAIBHSE!

BOOOBERRY
YOU MUST MAKE A CHOICE

LEAVING BOOBERRY TO PONDER THE QUESTION:
IS IT POSSIBLE FOR A GHOST TO BE HAUNTED?





I HAVE NOTHING TO SAY TO YOU, COUNT, SAVE THIS: I PLEDGE HERE AND NOW THAT YOU WILL PAY FOR EVERY CRIME YOU HAVE PERPETRATED AGAINST THE PEOPLE OF THIS LAND.

WELL SAID, SINCERELY. DIDN'T YOU FIND THE CAP'N'S SPEECH STIRRING, FRANK?

I GOT CHILLS.

THESE "CRIMES" YOU SPEAK OF COULD HAVE BEEN AVOIDED ALTOGETHER IF I HAD RECEIVED A DIFFERENT WELCOME TO THESE SHORES.

DID YOU NEVER WONDER WHAT IT WAS THAT DREW ME HERE?

IN CEREALIA I SAW A KINGDOM WITHOUT A KING, A LAND IN NEED OF A LEADER. I STEPPED UP TO FILL THAT VOID BUT FOUND MYSELF RESISTED, REVILED AND FEARED, ME!

I ASK YOU: WHY WOULD ANYONE FEAR ME?



YOU BROUGHT AN EVIL
MAGIC TO THIS LAND. YOU
SPOILED OUR EVERLASTING
MORNINGS WITH DARKNESS.



BUT IT'S STILL
TOO BRIGHT
AROUND HERE
FOR YOUR
LIKING, I TAKE
IT?

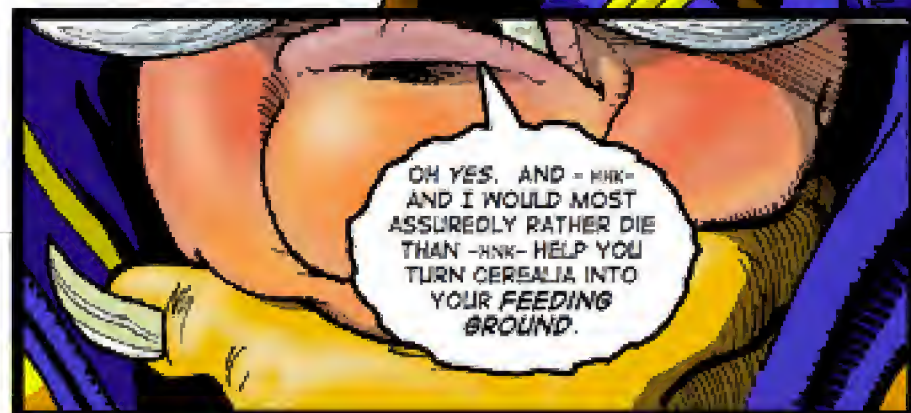


YOU KNOW
DAMN WELL
IT IS!!

JUST AS YOU KNOW THIS
IS YOUR **LAST CHANCE**
TO TELL ME WHAT
ENCHANTMENT THE KING
AND HIS PET WIZARD
CAST OVER THIS LAND TO
PROTECT IT FROM THE
FALL OF NIGHT!

I'VE -KK- BEEN AROUND
FOR -HK- A LONG TIME,
COUNT. I KNOW A LOT
OF -BK- THINGS.

FOR INSTANCE,
-GAK- I KNOW -KK-
WHAT YOU ARE!



OH YES. AND -HKK-
AND I WOULD MOST
ASSUREDLY RATHER DIE
THAN -HKK- HELP YOU
TURN CEREALIA INTO
YOUR **FEEDING**
GROUND.



DID YOU EXPECT
ME TO **KILL** YOU
JUST THEN?

WHY YES, I
RATHER THOUGHT
YOU MIGHT.

NONSENSE.

IF YOU **TRULY** KNEW ME AS WELL
AS YOU CLAIM, YOU WOULD KNOW I
PREFER NOT TO DIRTY MY OWN
HANDS WITH SUCH MATTERS.



I 'AVE WAITED A
LIFETIME FOR ZIS,
MON AMI!

AU REVOIR,
CAPITAINE!

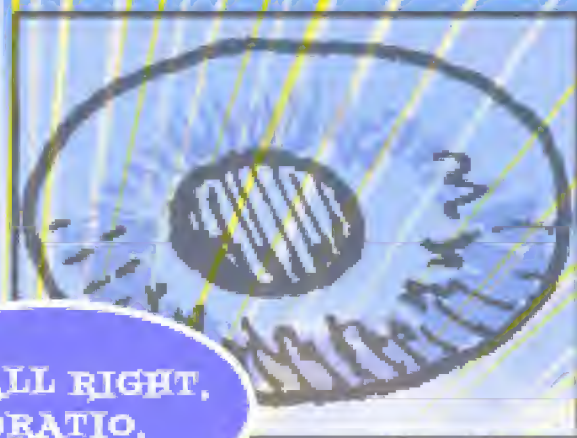
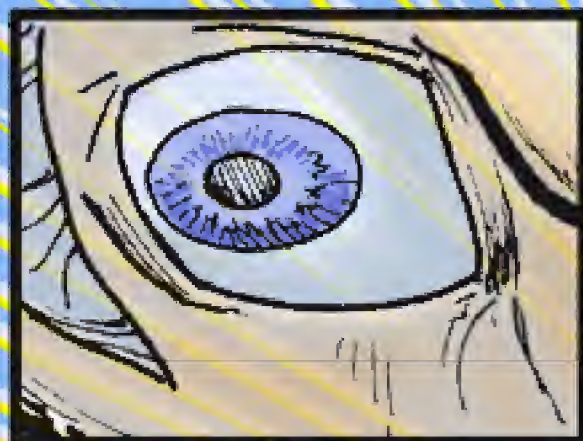


SATISFYING,
MONSIEUR
LAFOOTE?

AH OUI, MONSIEUR
LE COMTE. MORE
THAN YOU CAN
KNOW.

MYSELF AND MY
CREW ARE YOURS,
AS WE 'AVE
AGREED.

GOOD. I BELIEVE I WILL
HAVE NEED OF YOUR
SERVICES VERY SOON.



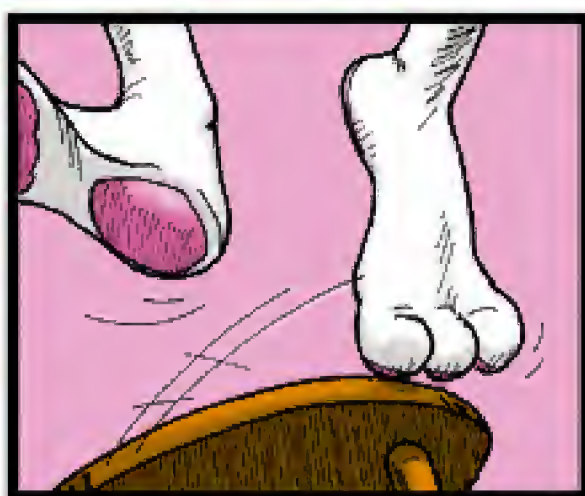
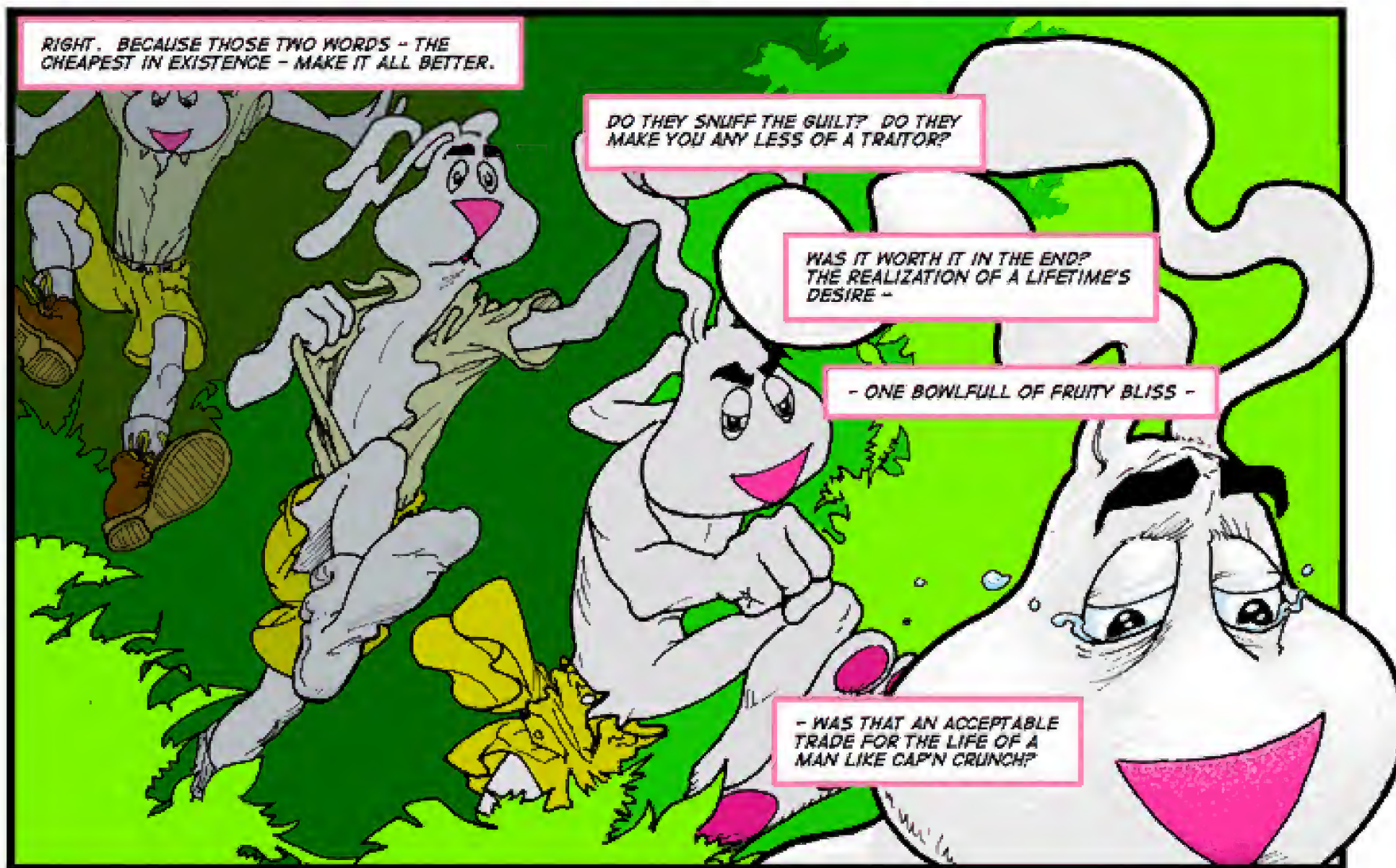
IT'S ALL RIGHT, HORATIO.

YOUR LONG VOYAGE IS OVER.



COME HOME.





IT AS A MORNING THAT WOULD LONG
BE REMEMBERED -- THE MORNING
THAT TOUCAN SAM AND COCO EXITED
THE FOREST BEARING THE LIFELESS
FORM OF CAP'N CRUNCH.

AND THOUGH THAT MORNING WAS
JUST AS BRIGHT AND PLEASANT AS
EVERY OTHER, IT CAME TO BE KNOWN
AS "THE DAY THE SHADOW FELL."

A CHILL HAD CREPT INTO EVERY HEART
THAT COULD NOT BE IGNORED. THE
WORLD HAD SOURED AND ALL FEARED
THAT NOTHING COULD BE DONE TO
PUT THINGS RIGHT AGAIN.

ALL, THAT IS, BUT ONE.

NO ONE WOULD
SUGGEST THAT HE'S
GONE BEFORE HIS
TIME -

CRUNCHUM ETERNUM

--THE CAP'N HAD PUT OFF
THIS "APPOINTMENT" FOR
NEARLY SIX CENTURIES --
BUT I THINK WE'D ALL
AGREE HE'S GONE TOO
SOON.

THE LOSS OF THIS ONE
MAN IS INCALCULABLE AS
HE WAS SO MANY THINGS
TO EACH OF US:

HERO, LEADER,
INSPIRATION.

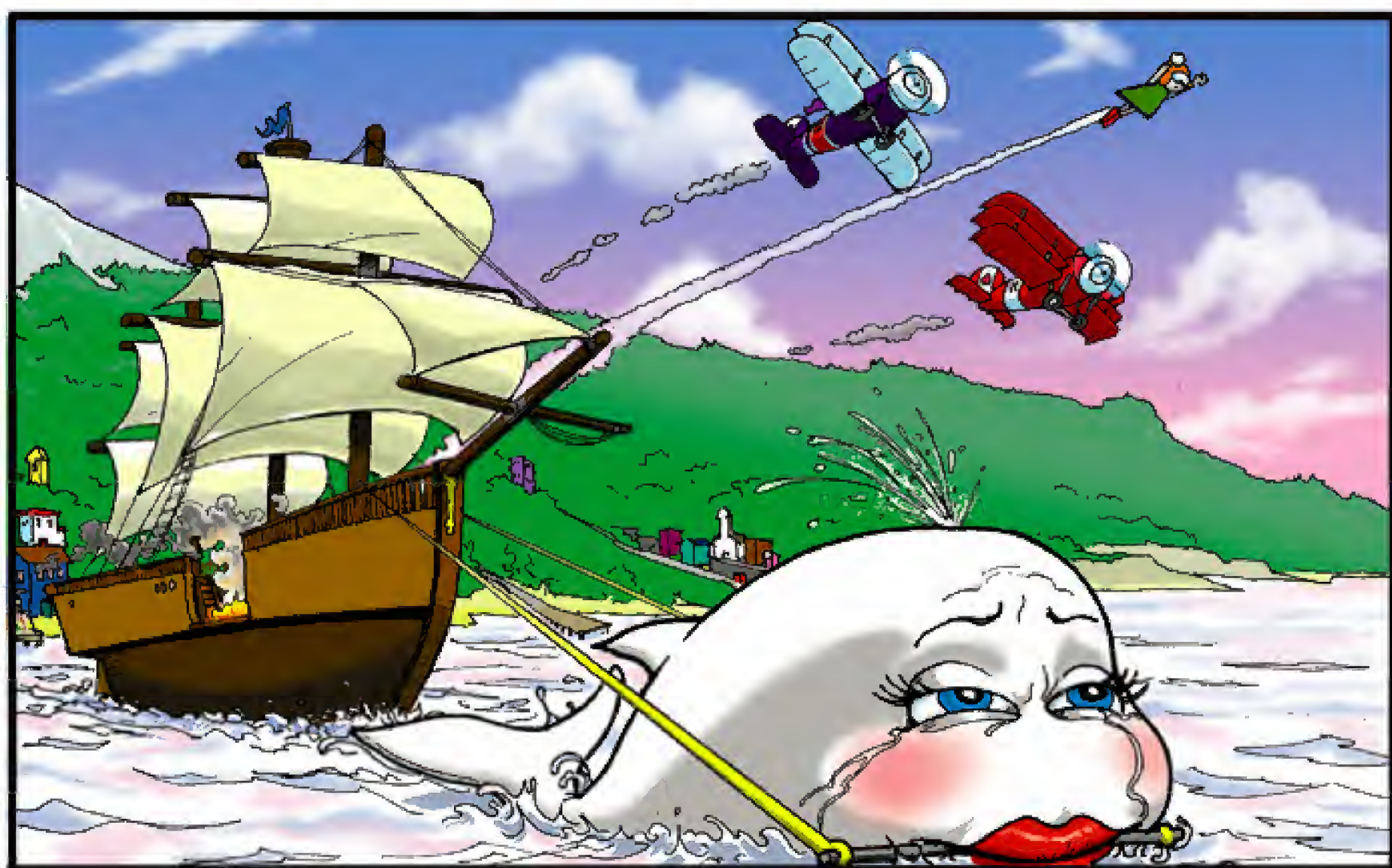
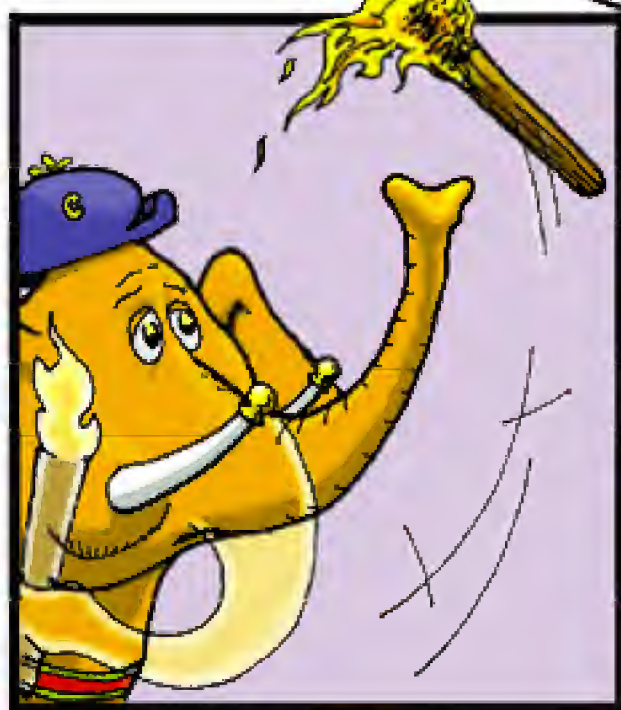
A TEACHER AND
ROLE-MODEL.

A FATHER.

A FRIEND.

HE BELIEVED THE BEST
IN ALL OF US, EVEN
WHEN THAT BELIEF WAS
UNDESERVED.

AND THOUGH HE LOVED
PEACE ABOVE ALL, HE
WAS NEVER AFRAID TO
ACT WHEN EVIL REARED
ITS HEAD.

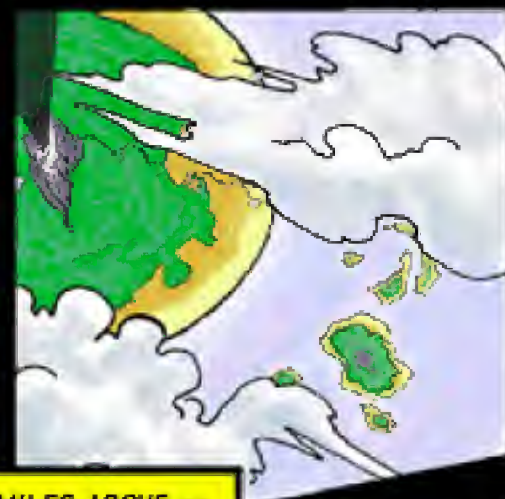




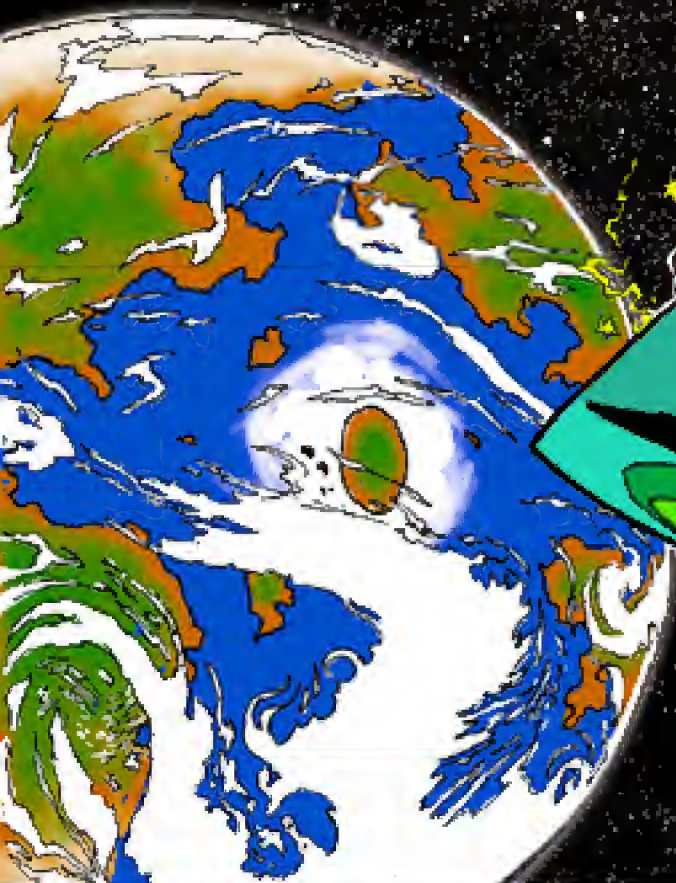
THE S.S. GUPPY GENTLY BURNS AWAY, DRIFTING
TOWARDS ITS LAST HORIZON, WHILE --



-- MILES ABOVE --



-- WE FIND ANOTHER SHIP ON FIRE.



THEY'RE COMING!!!

